

## MASSACHUSETTS TO CALIFORNIA--BY MOTORCYCLE!

### 1920 Trip Memorable

Marilyn Fuqua, Sacramento, CA, shares this fascinating account of the unusual cross-country journey by her former mother-in-law, Louise Dunham Fuqua (b. 1897)(6)(John Dunham (b. 1751) 1, Johnson 2, David B. 3, Andrew E. 4, Harry E. 5). NOTE: Our Dunham Index lists only one Johnson Dunham, a man born Oct. 20, 1771 (not 1776, as Marilyn's records show) A member of the 6th generation in America, our Johnson Dunham had this ancestral line: Deacon John 1, Joseph 2, Micaiah 3, Micaiah 4, David 5). (Ref: D-174535, p. 479). The article that Marilyn sent comes from a San Bernardino newspaper dated July 11, 1958:

## California, Here We Come, as Played 40 Years Ago by Nortonite by Cycle

After months of planning and preparation "The Day" had arrived, June 1, 1920. It was a beautiful morning when we left Revere, Mass., starting our trip to California via motorcycle with sidecar, a journey that took three months.

Of course we could have made the trip in less time but we were not in a hurry and there was a lot of the United States to be seen. Burt had been to some of the southern states and as far west as Kansas, but I had never been outside of the New England States.

In western Massachusetts, we said goodbye to members of the family and stopped to see landmarks familiar to Burt.

THIS YEAR the Motorcycle and Allied Trades Association was offering bronze, silver and gold medals for motorcycle trips of 1,000, 2,000 and 3,000 miles respectively. To receive a medal it was necessary for the traveler to obtain the signature of some city or town official once in a stated number of miles. Seems to me

we were to get a signature once in every 250 miles. So

We obtained the first signature before starting on the trip. In Albany, New York, we obtained the second signature, but it wasn't easy. Evidently the official felt

that he would be out of order in some way by signing such a paper. That was the only instance where we met any opposition when requesting a signature. Generally interest in our trip was shown.

Our goal in New York was Niagara Falls. Such a LOT of water! We made the thrilling descent to the rocks at the foot of the falls, donned oilskins, and followed the guide across the walks that led under the falls. It certainly was breathtaking, literally.

Burt had been to the falls before but had not gone under them. We passed up riding in the Maid of the Mist, sure that riding in a small boat would not compare to the excitement of the walk under the falls.

IN OHIO we spent a weekend in Akron to view motorcycle races. Near Columbus we had engine trouble. We let the cycle coast down a decline by a stream, hoping to start the engine that way. It did not work. Burt toiled and studied but was unable to repair the trouble. Then we tried to push the cycle up the sandy

bank. The old adage of "If at first you don't succeed, etc." was tested then. We huffed and puffed and finally succeeded in getting the motorcycle up on ground level with the road.

By pulling the cycle up on the stand, lifting the rear wheel off the ground, and pulling the wheel by hand (quite a trick). Burt was able to start the engine. He did not let it stop until we got to a repair shop in Columbus.

Roads were poor in towns and cities, and the country roads had deep ruts. As motorcycles with sidecars are set at a narrow gauge, much of the time we rode with either the cycle or sidecar up in the air, so to speak. When the sidecar was on the high side, I'd ride up on the side of it to sort of balance it. In Columbus we had the axle extended so that the wheels would follow in the ruts made by cars.

MISSOURI MUD is no myth so we pitched the tent and waited until the roads dried enough to allow us to travel. Although we did not plan to do so, we stayed three weeks in Emporia, Kansas, with an uncle and aunt of Burt's.

We visited a cousin who was a wheat farmer and who was then harvesting his crop. Seeing them thresh wheat was new and interesting to me.

How HOT that state is! Being accustomed to the hills of New England I found the level country there fascinating. Not a rise in the ground as far as one could see. It seemed to be a picture rather than a reality.

Colorado was full of interesting sights. At Colorado Springs we made side trips to the Garden of the Gods, Seven Falls, the grave of the author of Ramona, Helen Hunt Jackson, Cave of the Winds, and best of all, Pike's Peak. We shared a rented car with two families of Missouri farmers and had a delightful day. Never thought I'd pick forgetmenots next to a snowbank but I did on that trip.

The Missouri folks found the motorcycle sidecar fascinating so while the women and two children of each family rode in turn, I rode in their Overlands. I decided that I was seeing more of the country from the sidecar than they were seeing from the automobiles.

WE TRAVELED together and visited the old mining towns of Cripple Creek and Victor. At Victor we all stayed in a deserted house, each family occupying a room. When the mining boom was over, the houses of the town seemed to be a grocery store, drug store and gas station. From here our Missouri friends went on to visit Denver and we continued west.

Utah may have looked like the "Promised Land" to the Mormons but it looked pretty desolate to us until we neared Provo.



There crops were green and cattle seemed to be knee deep in alfalfa. You've no idea how good the green growth looked. We enjoyed Salt Lake City and the Great Salt Lake.

Entering Las Vegas, Nevada, we ran out of gas and had to push the cycle for a short distance. Gasoline cost 60 cents a gallon in desert towns. Las Vegas was not much of a town; a couple of gas stations, small post office and maybe a couple of stores. A rain storm made the road practically impassable as we were leaving Las Vegas and mud caked between the tire and mudguard so that the front wheel slid like a runner until we dug the mud out.

In Kansas I sat too close to a huge gopher snake; couldn't have been more startled if it had been a boa constrictor.

BECAUSE WE traveled light, I had no dress-up clothes and wore a type of coverall. In Ohio we had motorcycle trouble not far from a swanky summer resort hotel. Because we just HAD to eat, we went there for supper. The proprietor did not welcome us with a wide smile but when Burt assured him that we would be paying customers, we were accommodated.

Broken spokes were our biggest trouble. Roads were so rough that spokes snapped often and the risk of falling from the bike was with the risk of the wheel was mine, and one I did not relish.

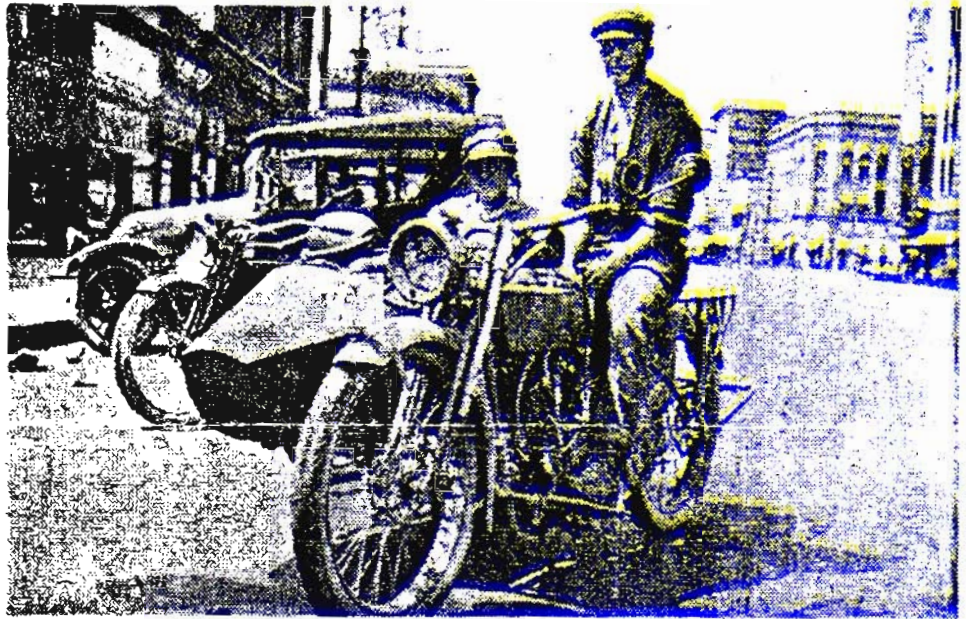
When we left home we planned to live in Atascadero, California. A friend had been there and was

sure that a family could make a living from an acre of ground, as well as from the company who ~~owned the tract~~. We spent 110 days looking around ~~decided~~ that it was not for us, and moved on.

After a short stay in the San Joaquin Valley, we decided that that wasn't for us either. We settled for Los Angeles where Burt went to work at his trade, photo-engraving.

NO SIGNS marked the state lines so at Amboy we were in California and did not know it. We made a noisy entrance into the state because the muffler had rusted off and no replacement was available. In San Bernardino we had it repaired.

As we rode down Cajon Pass, patches of green grass were at the sides of the road and soon lots of trees, palm trees (first we'd seen) too, and lawns appeared. All were a welcome sight after seeing desert for days and days.



We stopped briefly in Los Angeles and rode on to Ventura, really on the coast, where we obtained the last signature on our trip report. We had accomplished what we set out to do, a coast-to-coast trip by motorcycle, earned a gold medal, had a wonderful trip, learned a lot of geography and met hosts of fine people.

THE TRIP was not full of excitement but we believe that it was among the "firsts." Doubt if there were many who made such a long trip at that time. After the first few nights on the road we used a tent only when the weather was threatening. In Missouri we were forced to use the mosquito tent once and sometimes we dug a fairly deep trench around the tent so that rain water would run off and not under the tent.

We camped in fields, pastures, farmers' front yards or beside the road whenever we were ready to stop.

"The Banks of the Wabash" conjures up pictures of moonlight and canoes, but we once camped close to a pigsty on the Wabash, not from choice, but because camping spots were scarce. West of the Mississippi River we slept indoors only once, in Salt Lake City. We camped in Gunnison, Colorado, for Burt to catch his first rainbow trout.



**ALMOST 40 YEARS AGO NOW** — Above photo is of Mr. and Mrs. Burton Fuqua of 1371 Mt. View in San Bernardino as they were traveling to California from Massachusetts via motorcycle with sidecar . . . nearly 40 years ago. Below they are shown at their home last week with Mr. Fuqua holding the gold medal which was awarded to the couple by Motorcycle and Allied Trades Association in 1920 for having made the cross country trip by motorcycle.

(Mrs. Burton Fuqua, who has worked as a secretary in the Engineering Branch of Installations for the past 16 years, has written the following account of the motorcycle trip which she and her husband made to California nearly 40 years ago.)





THANKS TO ALLEN CURTIS, of Williamsburg, VA, DD has this fine photograph of Philander L. Curtis (1841-1910) (8) (Deacon John 1, John 2, Samuel 3, Ebenezer 4, Abigail Dunham Weston 5, Huldah Weston Curtis 6, Pliny Curtis 7), & his 4 sons. Standing are: Emmett A. (b. 1876); Charles (b. 1865); & Bert (b. 1867). Seated, beside his father, is Fred W. Curtis (b. 1868). All were residents of Berea, Ohio, where Pliny, a native of Litchfield, NY, had settled.

### QUERIES

**Mrs. Dale Gaa**, 442 Ryan Road, Greenwich, NY 12834, noticed a name among a June 1998 listing of Living Recipients of the Medal of Honor, all of whom were honored at a parade held in Saratoga Springs, NY. RUSSELL DUNHAM was among those named. Does anyone know Russell Dunham? Or know where he belongs in the total Dunham family tree (or should we say family forest?)?

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**Mrs. Cleo A. Holmes**, 3535 Mountain View Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90066-1921: Does anyone out there

know the parents of John Dunham (born Oct. 7, 1762 in Elizabeth, Essex Co., NJ; died Nov. 26, 1840 in Westfield, Essex, NJ)? The family lived at Trembley's Point, NJ, for the duration of the War of the Revolution. I would also appreciate hearing from any descendants of Ephraim Dunham & Eliza Clark of Warren County, Ohio.

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### An Apology for Wanting Money

Following after the Jan. 1, 1851 letter (pub. in the June '98 DD), this letter was also written by F. S. Dunham (1812-1856)(8)(John 1, John 2, John 3, Ebenezer 4, Ebenezer 5, Jonathan 6, Ralph 7) to his wife, Leah Anna. Dated from Cantwell's, DE, it reads: "My dear Love, I am setting here in my schoolroom by the stove. The wind is blowing coldly & strongly & I don't know what next, but this is about the beginning of winter here. For the last 4 weeks we have had April weather, no snow of any consequence or cold weather. I received your overflowing letter, & how happy I was. What part of it do you suppose I deliberate upon chiefly? How my Anna thinks & feels, what Frank says & what Sammy does. You cannot give me too much of that. I never loved little children so much before, & every baby that comes within eyeshot I look at with all my eyes. The Lord preserve & keep us all that we may be face to face in a few more weeks!

"I am delighted with the idea of having my dear mother under my OWN roof. It would make our joy complete. I do not love my mother less that I love my wife supremely & my children entirely. My heart, I feel, is large & expands with every new object which has become its own. It has been my dream of happiness to live surrounded by my kindred. How that dream seems likely to end, you know. But above all have I desired to be with my mother, to have the dearest friend of my childhood & the dearest friend of my manhood on either side, that associated with its HOLIEST object, I might live again "life's blest morn" as hand in hand with the dear heart's treasure, I pass onward through its meridian to ward its evening shadows. God grant it. But "His will be done."

"It is perhaps rather premature to fix upon the precise time Mother shall be with us, as I do not consider myself permanently fixed to this particular spot on earth. Understand me, now: I have no idea of going on a new wild goose chase. I think I am permanently cured. (To P. 5)



ALSO FROM CLEO HOLMES, Los Angeles, is this portrait of Mary Ann H. Dunham Jack (1815-1881), who was Cleo's great great grandmother. Born in Warren Co., OH, the daughter of Ephraim Dunham (1788-1857) & Eliza Clark, & the granddaughter of John Dunham (1762-1840) & Phebe Williams, Mary Ann married Joseph Jack in 1834 & moved to Pleasant Valley, Tama Co., Iowa.



1851 LETTER (from p. 4) I shall stick to the \$350.00 until the \$500.00 or \$800.00 ((these would be annual salaries)) is placed before me in a tangible shape. I have been surely reduced in my pecuniary pretensions & sadly humbled, to boot, but it was best for me, & I trust I have profited somewhat thereby. Nevertheless, I honestly believe that, as the world goes, I am justly entitled to something more than the pittance I receive here & that, with God's blessing on my endeavors, I can obtain it. My views of course are confined to this peninsula, & I shall keep a sharp 'look out.' Mr. H. will aid me all in his power, & Providence may raise up other friends. Vacancies usually occur in the fall, you know, & I do no despair of finding something to my advance by the next.

"I cannot conceal from myself that I am becoming exceedingly desirous of money, but I trust my motives are not utterly unworthy: to provide for my OWN & to pay to the utmost farthing my pecuniary obligations. It seems to me in reviewing the past year that I have been guilty of 2 capital errors: an error of action in th-----, impeded perhaps by a sluggish disease. I did not ----- promptly the means possibly within my power for extricating myself from the difficulties into which my own impu----- had brought me. (2) an error of feeling, in that I was constantly chafing under a sense of wounded pride or vanity, but God has been merciful & long-suffering. I feel physically & mentally stronger now than for years before. Pray that my faith may be increased, for this is what I most need.

"I shall endeavor to prepare the house according to your desire as near as may be. There are 4 windows 1 1/4 yards long by 3/4 yards wide; 3 windows half the length & of the same width. The front room will require 24 yds. carpeting. I shall endeavor to procure something to cover it unless Sister's carpet should prove cheaper than any I can buy. Cheapness is a necessary condition with us, you know, in everything. If a fortune should chance to spring upon us, won't we sue it well?

I hope you will not judge of my spirits from my poor writing. I believe they were never more elastic--that is, considering I am obliged to go to bed every night without my own wife, & borrow other people's children & try to think, 'This is Frank,' & 'That is Sammy.' (I can't borrow other people's wives, mind you.) But, dear heart, I wish I could know at this instant that you are all well, comfortable & happy. (You have to write me pretty soon after receipt of this, that's plain.)

Rather queer to make you pay for the postmaster's mistake, wasn't it? You & I are not money men, for we haven't got it. Never mind, Honey. The longest lane, etc., & if it have not, why we will trust HIM who is ever kind & merciful. God bless you, my love, & the dear little ones. My love to my mother, my sisters & brothers, & so good night & again, God bless you, my dearest.

"F. S. DUNHAM, your husband now & ever."

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